

***Cichlasoma urophthalmus* (Günther 1862)**
Mayan Cichlid



Photo by H. Jelks, USGS

Identification: The Mayan Cichlid has five to seven dark bars on the side and a large black blotch surrounded by a blue halo and a yellow iris on the upper caudal peduncle. The body is olive green dorsally and laterally. The caudal and dorsal fins are edged in red, and the chin, throat, and breast are also red. The species typically grows to 30 cm SL. Often called the Mexican Mojarra. Anal spines V to VII. From Page and Burr (1991).

Similar Species: Sheepshead (*Archosargus probatocephalus*) has black bars on a white body and lacks the blotch on the caudal peduncle. Sergeant Major (*Abudefduf saxatilis*) has a more rounded body shape and yellow dorsum.

Native Range: Atlantic slope drainages from Rio Coatzacoalcas, Mexico to the Rio Prinzapolka, Nicaragua. It occurs in freshwater, estuaries, and marine habitats in the native range. From Page and Burr (1991), Martinez-Palacios and Ross (1992), Greenfield and Thomerson (1997), Chávez-López et al. (2005), and Miller (2005).

Ecology: The Mayan Cichlid breeds in freshwater and estuarine environments. It eats a variety of prey including fishes, crustaceans, and other benthic invertebrates. The species reaches sexual maturity between 75 and 80 mm TL. It is exploited in artisanal fisheries in the native range as it is easily caught on hook and line. From Miller (2005).

Mayan Cichlid populations in Florida Bay were studied by Faunce and Lorenz (2000) and Faunce et al. (2002). Adams and Wolf (2007) studied the species in southwest Florida (Charlotte Harbor).

Nonindigenous Occurrences: This species is one of the most abundant and widespread species in south Florida, occurring in nearly all fresh- and brackish-water habitats south of Lake Okeechobee (Shafland et al. 2008). The species is widespread in freshwater and coastal habitats of southern Florida, including Everglades National Park and Big Cypress National Preserve (Loftus 1987; Faunce and Lorenz 2000; Faunce et al. 2002; Rehage and Loftus 2007; Shafland et al. 2008). It ranges north along the east coast to Merritt Island and along the west coast to Tampa Bay (Paperno et al. 2008).

